

# Critics Against Arranged Marriage Destiny in *Kumandhanging Katresnan* Novel by Any Asmara

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## ABSTRACT

Arranged marriage is still warm to be discussed because it can make one of the couples suffer, especially women. Cases of arranged marriage were still a discussion in the news in Indonesia. One of the Javanese literary works that discussed the arranged marriage was *Kumandhanging Katresnan* (KK) by Any Asmara. The marriage is regarded as fulfilling the destiny of God. The characters in the novel KK are required to be obedient to the marriage of his destiny. This research aims to describe the criticism of fate in the novel KK through the characters. This research uses qualitative methods with sociological approaches. The results showed that the arranged marriage could have psychologically adverse impacts on women and susceptible to violence. Any Asmara wants to give criticism to parents who do not listen to their children in making decisions and the only importance of social status in conducting a marriage. Nevertheless, he also gave criticism to individuals who did not receive his destiny. In the end, the characters as individuals have the freedom to determine their lives, but it can be concluded that the individual who is grateful to God's determination will obtain peace and happiness.

**Keywords:** *Destiny, Provision, Nrima, Kumandhanging Katresnan*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arranged marriage is a topic that has been discussed for a long time. This is evidenced by several Javanese and Indonesian literary works in the 1920s to 1960s that carried the topic of arranged marriage. A phenomenal work in Indonesian literature on the topic of arranged marriage is Marah Roesli's *Siti Nurbaya*. As for Javanese literary works on the topic of arranged marriage, according to Utomo [1], are *Kraman* by Any Asmara; *Semi Prawan Metro* and *Wedi ing Ayang-Ayang Dhewe* by Suharsini Wisnu; and *Mursal* by Widi Widajat. As if they are timeless, discussions and discussions about arranged marriage are often held. The last news about matchmaking that became the subject of conversation was the story of a bride in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, who ran away after the wedding in September 2019 [2]. According to Maimun et al. [3], The high number of divorces for divorce cases in Madura is partly due to matchmaking. Apart from the existing cases, Bahana [4] in his research states that arranged marriage is the fulfilment of destiny from God.

Referring to Bahana's view, that arranged marriage is the fulfilment of God's destiny. This is per the concept of destiny presented by Wulandari [5] that destiny is everything that Has been written by Allah SWT in His Knowledge. However, with His wisdom, He gives every human freedom to choose his path with his prepared consequences. Concerning the statement, Magnis-Suseno [6] also expressed his opinion based on the Javanese

worldview that destiny is a human life from the very beginning, and no one can circumvent the decree. Each individual has specific provisions that cannot be resisted, whether alive, dead, disease, even bad luck. If an individual is about to fight destiny, it will destabilize the universe (cosmos), and the chaos can only be neutralized with a variety of unsettling experiences. The concept of arranged marriage destiny is also found in the novel *Kumandhanging Katresnan* by Any Asmara.

Any Asmara is a Javanese novelist. Utomo [1] in his book *Eskapisme Sastra Jawa* called him a meteor of a petty romance author because of his productivity in writing novels and short stories. Any Asmara itself is a pseudonym of Achmad Ngubaeni Ranusastraasmara. He was born in Banyumas on 13 August 1913. In 1932, Any Asmara made his debut as a Javanese literary author by writing a children's story published in Batavia's magazines. The works of Any Asmara are categorized as roman moralism. According to Quinn in Utomo [1], Any Asmara writes in a style that flows just like that, filled with dialogue that flows rapidly with the colloquial language appearing dominant.

*Kumandhanging Katresnan* (hereby referred to as KK) was chosen in this study because it tells the true story that happened to the characters' efforts. Any [7] himself, in his foreword, says that the making of the novel is based on a request that goes through the story; of course, the name and place are disguised by it. According

to Any statement, it can be said that the matchmaking story in KK's novel was written based on a true story.

The research on KK's novel centers on R.A. Tien Tiesnowati, R. Susilo, and Rr. Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, because they are the ones who are faced with accepting destiny in life, experiencing arranged marriage, and deciding choices in themselves. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the matchmaking's fate is found in the novel KK and how the acceptance of such destiny towards man is seen from the characters. This research aims to describe criticism of destiny in KK novels and express the acceptance of destiny towards humans that still have relevance to this day.

Winda Tiswati researched KK novels [8] titled *Tema dan Amanat dalam Novel Kumandhanging Katresnan Karya Any Asmara*; In the study, Winda found several themes in KK novels. Winda concludes that KK's novel's overall theme is a romance that includes struggle, sacrifice, and honesty. The theme of romance is very dominant because it is built by the love story of R.A. Tien Tisnowati and R. Sukmana.

Destiny research has been conducted before, among others, by Andry Setiawan and Joesana Tjahjani [9] under the title *A Claim against Destiny as Criticism of Javanese Philosophy in Indonesian Novel*. The results showed that Wisanggeni's character, as the main character of the story, contradicted the concept of *narima* and *rila* in Javanese philosophy. Meanwhile, from the results of semiotic analysis, it was found that, as a sign, *narima* carries an attitude that will lead to a simple life that does not impose personal will. The sign of *rila* carries the sense that people who submit to this attitude are morally good. The study results concluded that as an individual a person accepts his destiny, but the individual has the freedom to determine his own life.

Omega Nilam Bahana [4] with her thesis entitled *Penyesuaian Pernikahan dengan Pasangan dan Pernikahan Pada Perempuan Yang Dijodohkan*. The results of his research revealed that matchmaking does not always end in the process of divorce because marriage is interpreted as a source of happiness. The solution to the problems experienced and the arranged marriage is interpreted as fulfilling of God's destiny.

Based on the three previous studies, although the data sources were similar to Tiswati's research, the discussion's focus was different. Tiswati examines the KK novel's theme and mandate, while this research focuses on the destiny experienced by the characters in the KK novel. However, fate has something in common with the research of Setiawan and Tjahjani, and Bahana. The difference in this research lies in the discussion about matchmaking, which is not just a choice of predestination and/or fulfillment of God's destiny but is also seen as a criticism that the author intends to convey.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is qualitative. Ratna [10] says that this method utilizes a description interpretation. In line with this opinion, qualitative research is a study that produces a detailed description in the form of a description [11]. This study's data source is *Kumandhanging Katresnan* (KK) by Any Asmara, third print in 1964 and published by publisher Dua-A. Previously, KK's novel was first printed in 1961 by publisher Jaker. This study's data is in the form of sentences, paragraph pieces, and dialogue excerpts taken from the novel KK. Techniques in helping collect data from KK novels using library study techniques. Faruk [12] suggested that library studies were conducted to help with data collection in this study by reading-intensive and repetitive KK novels followed by reading a list of references related to problem formulation.

Another technique used to assist this research is descriptive analysis. This technique is carried out by describing the facts, followed by analysis [10]. The data analysis technique is used to classify the recorded data, describe the events experienced by the characters in the KK novel, provide sufficient understanding and explanation of the arranged marriage fate experienced by the existing characters, and make conclusions on the results of the KK novel data analysis. Also, the sociology of literature approach is used to determine the relationship between the author in presenting a critique of the fate of arranged marriage in the novel, and seeing the conditions of society that existed at that time related to arranged marriage destiny.

Damono [13] states that there are three classifications of literary sociology problems: the sociology of the author, the sociology of literary works, and the social influence of literary works. In this research, the study focuses on the sociological problems of literary works or the text itself. Thus, what becomes the study of this research is the relationship between literary works and the reality referred to in the literary work itself, in this case, the KK novel. Through KK, Any Asmara expressed criticism of the arranged marriage fate in Javanese society.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

KK novel tells a love story between R.A. Tien Tiesnowati with R. Sukmana. The problem that arises from their story is because R.A. Tien is the daughter of a rich Solo *priyayi*, while R. Sukmana is an ordinary person, so on her way, her parents arranged R.A. Tien to marry a respected noble descendant. Tiswati [8] states that R.A. Tien is described as a very obedient character, so she complied with her parents' decision to part with R. Sukmana and had to accept an arranged marriage. Of course, the description of the character R.A. The very obedient Tien hints at fulfilling her destiny. Besides that, this novel also tells the love story between R. Susilo and

Rr. Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, who also accepted the match.

### **3.1. Acceptance of Arranged Marriage Fate to R.A Tien Tiesnowati**

Geertz's research [14] mentioned that parents arrange most marriages in Java and they are the one who finds a potential match and decides the wedding day. In his research, Geertz highlighted that the most important thing in matchmaking is social class because a social class difference between the families of the prospective spouses will cause tension. Referring to Geertz's opinion, R.A. Tien, he had to be willing to part with R. Sukmana because R.A. Tien's parent has found a mate who is equal to him. R.A. Tien must accept that the match is the fulfilment of his destiny; this is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Maybe the human in this world is just me who is the hardest. Because I could not bear the torment of this life, I almost did something terrible. Luckily then I was given awareness. If I do something like that, it will make my father's good name worse, my heart's feelings then (I) can only surrender to the Almighty. [7]

The excerpt above shows that R.A. Tien has surrendered to God regarding the arranged marriage between her parents and accepted the arranged marriage as her destiny. Koentjaraningrat in Setiawan [9] states that accepting or *nrima* in Javanese is an attitude of surrendering to destiny. As for the KK novel, it is stated that in the end, R.A. Tien surrendered to her arranged marriage fate. However, before she gave up and took it for granted, she tried to fight for his love with R. Sukmana by talking with his father. However, her attempts failed [7].

Though her attempt failed, it proves that R.A. Tien keeps trying before she finally accepts her arranged marriage as destiny. Mulder in Widodo [15] says that for Javanese people, surrender is not the same as *nrima* 'accept' because resignation describes a situation of simply giving up on life, while *nrima* means accepting one's fate but still being balanced with effort and awareness within oneself. Therefore, before she entrusted herself to God by obeying all His provisions and not imposing her will, R.A. Tien has been trying to fight for her love. In this context, her obedience to God is illustrated through appreciating and devoting her parents by following her father's matchmaking request. This is per the other statement of Mulder [15], which states that in carrying out obedience and obedience to God, it is reflected in the relationship with God Himself, the relationship with fellow humans, and the relationship to the environment. One way to apply this relationship with fellow human beings is to respect and devotion to parents. Referring to the views of Mulder and Koentjaraningrat, it can be said that R.A. Tien *nrima* on her matchmaking fate as the will of the Almighty.

Based on the story of the character R.A. Tien, the Javanese surrender is not just giving up on the situation,

but there are still efforts and efforts made before. However, in living the trust, R.A. Tien is still tested to have the steadfastness to guard her destiny with events that led him to surrender. R.A. Tien began to fight against her destiny.

### **3.2. Resistance the Fate Arranged Marriage in R.A Tien Tiesnowati**

R.A. Tien has indeed accepted her matchmaking destiny as the will of the Almighty because it can be proven by her attitude while living together with someone she does not love. This is contained in the excerpt below:

Women should be devoted to their husbands. Even though my heart always screams, complains, flares up, cries, even though I insist that I have to show my devotion. [7]

R.A. Tien has shown a sense of filial piety to her father and husband as a sign of acceptance of her destiny, but there is one thing that makes R.A. Tien want to fight her arranged marriage fate. This was revealed from the incident when she found out that her husband had another wife and wanted to live in the same house. R.A. Tien had tried to be patient and tried to discourage her husband from wanting to unite a new wife with him [7], but R.A. Tien failed.

Since she failed to undo her husband's intentions, her husband becomes increasingly bad behavior. She decided to leave her husband while pregnant with a four-month-old fetus. Her decision to leave was a form of rebellion against him. Her rebellion could mean that she was no longer able to live up to the fate of the arranged marriage that had been underway. The concept of *nrima* reinforces this according to De Jong [16], which says that *nrima* has the meaning of being satisfied with his fate, not rebelling, and accepting with gratitude. Thus, R.A. Tien's "rebellious" attitude towards her husband's treatment can be expressed as being out of date with the fate of her arranged marriage and against the fate of her arranged marriage. According to Magnis-Suseno [6] destiny is man's life from the very beginning that has been established, and nothing can avoid such a statute; even bad luck is unfought. If an individual is about to fight fate, it will destabilize the cosmos, and the chaos can only be neutralized with a variety of unsettling experiences. Wulandari [5] states that Allah SWT gives freedom to every human being to choose his path (destiny) with its prepared consequences. Referring to Magnis-Suseno and Wulandari's opinion of destiny, indeed R.A. Tien experienced unsettling events resulting after he left home and chose his path.

During the journey with an uncertain purpose, she experienced various unsettling events, and it is a test to raise awareness in R.A. Tien as a result of having chosen her own path. When R.A. Tien was aware of the test that God had given and remained steadfast in his will by accepting it, it would impact the smooth journey that R.A. Tien went through next. In the end, after going

through various trips and events, R.A. Tien was reunited with R. Sukmana, the man who became her lover before she accepted an arranged marriage with R.M Purwidirdjo [7]. Of course, the meeting of R.A. Tien with R. Sukmana was the result of her decision against destiny and was the will of R.A. Tien himself. Furthermore, this will become God's decree because R.A. Tien has passed the test that He gave. Through this meeting, R.A. Tien resumed her previously delayed love story with R. Sukmana [7].

R.A. Tien's actions resuming her love story with R. Sukmana show that she defied her previous destiny and continued her next destiny. R.A. Tien no longer lives the fate of her arranged marriage with R.M. Purwodirjo. She struggled out of the temptations in her household, which meant that she too came out of the arranged marriage that was binding within her. Then she managed to reclaim her romance's destiny, despite having to go through several events that had been a hindrance to her life, in contrast to other characters, namely R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah Wahyuningsih also experienced an arranged marriage.

### **3.3. Acceptance of Arranged Marriage Fate to R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah Wahyuningsih**

R. Susilo is the son of R. Sukmana and Neng Dedeh Siti Kurniasih. Meanwhile, Rr. Sri Endah Wahyuningsih is the son of R.M. Purwodirjo and R.A. Tien Tisnowati, who later became the adopted son of R. Sukmana. Referring to Geertz's opinion, the parents arrange to matchmake, and what R. Sukmana did to her child [7]. In R. Sukmana's letter to R. Susilo, he wanted his son to marry Rr. Sri Endah, her adopted son. With the self-awareness of their respective children and/or without coercion, they accept the match. This can be seen from the incident when R. Susilo asked about the ability of Rr. Sri Endah only answered with a nod and hid her face in R. Susilo's chest [7]. Thus, what did R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah was an act that was *nrima* for her match. They do not rebel and accept with the satisfaction of their destiny, in line with De Jong's concept of *nrima*. It is said that the actions of R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah, who accepted with satisfaction, did not rebel, then received the gift of two children, a girl, and a boy, making their household life very peaceful and happy [7]. It can be said that acceptance of destiny with a sense of *nrima* will be rewarded well.

### **3.4. Author's Criticism Againsts Arranged Marriage**

KK novel talks about the arranged marriage experienced by R.A Tien, R. Susilo, and Rr. Sri Endah. The time setting for the KK novel is from the 1927-late 1950s. Based on existing historical facts, Amini [17] revealed in her research that marriage problems that arose in the 1920-1970s were related to early marriage, matchmaking, infidelity, and polygamy. Amini also mentioned that *Pesat* newspaper, which was published in 1939, contained the feelings of a woman who was

arranged by her parents. Besides, the theme of matchmaking was one of the themes that often appeared in novels in the period 1917-1942 because it was accepted by the community and did not have a dangerous impact on the colonial government's position. Therefore, the Javanese novels published by Balai Pustaka during that period were dominated by the theme of Javanese life concepts, marriage, domestic life, life struggle, crime eradication, and matchmaking.

Geertz's research [14] highlights that the most important thing in matchmaking is social class. The social class depicted in KK novels puts R.A. Tien's family at the top. The importance of social class leads to RB. Jayengsubroto, the father of R.A Tien, who is a noble descendant and retired Wedana Boyolali [7] wants to set up his son with R.M. Purwodirjo. Thus, the romance between R.A. Tien and R. Sukmana must end. Speaking of social class, R. Sukmana should also be in high social class because he can attend MULO [7]. At that time, only nobles or indigenous authorities could have an education. However, the title held by R. Sukmana is lower than that of R.M. Purwodirjo, who is the third generation of his family. Another possible problem is that RB. Jayengsubroto does not condone R.A. Tien's relationship with R. Sukmana other than the title he holds, is 19-year-old R. Sukmana while attending MULO. Should be at the same age R. Sukmana has attended AMS (high school level). This is possible because many indigenous people enter primary school at the age of more than 7 years; thus, it can hinder their careers both in private and in government.

The marriage between R.A. Tien and R.M. Purwodirjo was intended to keep the family from going down and missing and not living miserable lives. Actions committed by RB. Jayengsubroto caused R.A Tien to become miserable. Zulbaidah [18] said that, arranged marriage could impact women in marriage, one of which is the psychological impact in which she feels forced and helpless. This also happened to R.A Tien when she was about to be married; she felt that as a woman could only cry for not daring to fight back and fearing wretched y'all when obeying her father's will [7] R.A Tien also fell ill when less than ten days later she had to get married; she felt very hurt [7]. In addition to the psychological impact, Zulbaidah [18] said that arranged marriage also resulted in domestic violence in the form of physical acts that hurt and harm lives. After the marriage, R.A Tien was violently violent, and R.A Tien's head was struck by her husband [7]. From some of the above-arranged marriage impacts, Any Asmara as a writer, wants to convey criticism that arranged marriage only brings unhappiness and suffering for women.

Any Asmara also criticizes the arranged marriage practice, which only emphasizes class and social status. He wants to remind that a person's social status is not a guarantee that he has good character. *Bibit, bebet, bobot* are still important aspects of choosing a mate. R.M. Purwodirjo comes from clear *bibit* if traced to his family origins and has a respectable social status. He also has an

established *bebet* when viewed from his financial condition because he can hold a large wedding party with the shadow puppet show and many guests who come from the *priyayi* (royal nobility) [7]. However, he did not have good character (*bobot*), causing R.A. Tien to leave home and chose her path (destiny). On the other hand, Any also criticized parents who did not give space to speak to their children who were about to be arranged marriages, as happened to R.A. Tien. In contrast to R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah also experienced an arranged marriage. It seems clear, though, that R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah was arranged as an arranged marriage, R. Sukmana still allowed R. Susilo to choose. Through these two stories, it can be said that Any Asmara criticizes matchmaking by presenting two opposite events. First, arranged marriage only emphasizes social status without looking at other aspects of the concept of *bibit*, *bebet*, *bobot*, and parents who do not provide room to give room to speak out against the matchmaking. Second, a matchup preceded by dialogue is a depiction of open space to allow choosing.

The criticism expressed by Any seems to be still relevant to the Javanese people who are still making arranged marriages. In 2018-2019, there have been five marriages due to matchmaking in Gunung Kidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. However, the arranged marriage did not last long and led to divorce. Like what R.M Purwodirjo did, their parents did not give their children space to speak (opinions) about their chosen partner. Their parents also argued that the arranged marriage was for the happiness of their child. However, the reality is different from the marriage results in a dispute and is not supported by their partner. In other areas, in Jember Regency, East Java. A total of 76 divorce cases at the Jember Religious Court were due to arranged marriage. The reasons for the divorce were endless strife. Hamid [19] in his research states that the arranged marriage in Jember is caused by economic, cultural, and family factors. These factors are the same as what was done by R.M Purwodirjo, namely wanting to maintain the family's status and not wanting their children to get the hardships of life.

Apart from criticism of the matchmaking itself, Any wants to criticize individuals who are not happy with their destiny. Through the figures R. Susilo and Rr. Sri Endah, conveyed the message that a person who is satisfied with his fate, does not rebel, and accepts gratitude for his destiny, will be rewarded well. On the other hand, through the character R.A Tien, any conveyed that actions against destiny or self-awareness choosing one's destiny can bring tests in life. These tests come because of decisions made by the individual himself. When the individual succeeds in facing these tests, he can reclaim a new destiny in his life.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that Any Asmara wants to express his criticism of

arranged marriage. In this case, arranged marriage can negatively impact women and are vulnerable to violence, furthermore, through RB. Jayengsubroto wants to criticize parents who do not listen to and give voice (opinion) of their children in making decisions and only care about social status in making arranged marriage. This research can also contribute ideas about the need for *bibit*, *bebet*, *bobot* in choosing a partner. In terms of literary sociology, it was found that arranged marriage was a rife thing from the 1920s until the creation of this novel. However, the arranged marriage that existed in the 1920s was only concerned with social status. The height of the title carried the background for the breakup of love affairs. The title issue seems to be still relevant in arranged marriage today. Per the dynamics, a shift in people's mindset has occurred. If the noble title was the benchmark in the past, then at this time, the academic degree became the benchmark in addition to the work undertaken.

Besides, Any wanted to criticize individuals who do not accept their destiny. This was done by comparing the storyline of R.A Tien and Rr. Sri Endah, where is the storyline of Rr. Sri Endah can go well and be happy because it is told that she could accept her destiny. Research on the meaning of destiny, especially on arranged marriage, also needs to be carried out in modern times like today. Behind modernity, arranged marriage is still rife and accepting the destiny of arranged marriage is the key to the married couple's household ark. *Nrima* of arranged marriage destiny or with awareness against arranged marriage destiny is the choice of each individual. Individuals who accept God's provision will find peace, peace, and happiness in life and receive good rewards. However, every individual has the right to accept it or not by destiny. In the end, this research can be used as additional knowledge in the realm of meaning and acceptance of arranged marriage destiny. Although it is recognized that this research still has limitations in research, it requires further development, and its benefits can be felt for future generations.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Muhammad Fadly and Turita Indah Setyani. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Muhammad Fadly and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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